

Interview with: Dell LeFevre  
Interviewer: Jay Haymond  
Interview number: 1  
Place of interview: His house in Boulder  
Subject of interview: His life experiences as a rancher  
Transcriber: Vectra Solutions/MW  
Date: August 26, 1998  
Tape No: 1  
Side No: A

JH: Let's talk first, if we may, about your memories in Salt Gulch growing up. Your father is Mac?

DL: Yeah.

JH: Your mother is Leonora?

DL: Um-hum.

JH: What do you remember about, where you born here in Salt Gulch?

DL: Born here in Boulder.

JH: Did your father have a home here in Boulder?

DL: No. No. My mother. He lived in Salt Gulch. When I was born, he just worked for my granddad over in Salt Gulch, and they was kind of a Dr. Wilson. They called him Dr. Wilson. I think he was a chiropractor, but he delivered the babies, and he delivered me down here in Boulder.

JH: What year was that?

DL: 1940.

JH: So there's a time that was quite interesting in the country's history, beginning to talk about the war at that time.

DL: Yeah, well, I don't remember the war. I was too young. I can remember Korea, but I don't remember the second World War.

JH: When do your first memories begin?

DL: Oh, just a kid in Salt Gulch. Just a small boy in Salt Gulch. We lived in a log house. It had a kitchen on it, two rooms upstairs. I thought it was big, but it wasn't that big. Probably about a 16 x 16 living room. It was heated by wood. We had no running water. We just had an outhouse, and we carried water from the creek, and it was a small farm. My dad had quite a lot of sheep, a few cows, and he raised us kids. It was back in

the horse and buggy days when I grew up. He cut his hay with a mowing machine pulled by horses. He raked it with horses. They threw it on a wagon by hand until I was probably about 10 or 11 years old, then they got the hay bailer from Boulder. In 1952, my dad got his first tractor. He cut the hay with the tractor then. We had the sleigh in the wintertime. We fed cattle on the sleigh when it snowed. He hunted lions in the wintertime. He'd catch these mountain lions. The county had like a \$30-bounty on them, and that's how he fed us kids in the wintertime. He had a whole lot of hound dogs, and he'd chase lion all winter. He'd make me go with him. I just hated the lions, and I hated the dogs, and I hated to have to go. I was going to be a cowboy, not a lion hunter.

JH: When we talked to you before, you said you knew what at 10 years of age, that you were going to be a cattleman.

DL: Oh yeah. When I was just real small, I decided I was going to be a cowboy. I didn't know how I was going to buy a ranch, but that was my dream, to buy a ranch, and I was real slow in school. I was dyslexic, bad. I'm left handed, and I was really dyslexic. I probably couldn't even make a figure when I was in the third grade. I couldn't read the Dick and Jane book. But I was quick. I had a good memory on me. I could figure cows out. I could figure sheep out. They never had phonics back then. All they done is taught sight and memory, so about this time, my mother got real concerned and she started trying to teach me then. It was quite a struggle, but I knew I was going to be a cowboy, but I didn't know how.

JH: What was there about livestock and cows that attracted you to that business?

DL: My dad had a small farm. He always wanted a big ranch, and he had a small one. My dad was a good cow man. Well, he was a better sheep man than he was cattle. My dad used to have 150 ewes. He knew them all, and when I was about 12 years old, I started coming here working for the Lyman's because they had a lot of cattle, so I kind of grew up with the Lyman's. When I was about 13 or 14, I decided the only way I could get a ranch was, I was going to be a bull-rider, so I started riding bulls. I started riding bulls really young.

JH: When you say a cow man and livestock man, what comes to mind? In other words, is there a way of life...

DL: Oh. I knew cattle. I learned cattle real young, and my heros was cowboys. That's what I decided I was going to be.

JH: Who was a cowboy that you admired?

DL: Oh, the Lyman's over here. These Lyman's knew cattle inside and outside. They was some big cattlemen. They was like Clyde King-- grouchiest old man in the world, but he knew cattle. I hung around these guys that knew cattle, and I started getting cows. When I started working for Lyman's they'd give me doggie calves, and I put quite a little herd together. I started leasing pasture real young, and my dad never done books. Dad could read and write, even though he only went through the eighth grade. He could read and write, but he never would do business, and I was really poor in reading, but math just come natural. I can run figures in my head faster than you can run them on paper. I had a good memory for it, and so I would help my mother with all the book work. When I was 13 years old I helped her. When I was 15 years old, I was helping her do income tax, and dad never touched it. I never know my dad to write out a check. My dad had a lot of opportunities. My dad was scared. They went broke during the depression, I mean bad. The bank went broke and broke them the first time, then my granddad was aggressive. I guess I'm a lot like he was. He's a really aggressive guy, so he went out and bought a lot more than them. The real depression hit. It wiped him out. He was years paying that off, but my dad never would go in debt. There was ranches around here coming for sale. Just before I went in the army, there was a place down here, that would have been about 1960 some, early 60s, there was a place for sale for \$8,000. It had a home on it. It was about 80 or 90 acres, and it had 30-head of cow permit. My dad would not sign for me to get it. I couldn't get anybody to sign for me to buy that place. My mother would, but they wouldn't honor her. Back then it had to be a man. I tried the Lyman's. I tried my dad, and nobody would do it. Kirk, up here, the guy I used to work for, said Dell, it's too little. Let's go buy the Sandy Ranch or buy a big ranch, and that was okay then, and so a place over in Wayne County come up for sale, and Kirk and I went and seen FHA. That's Farm Credit now. The old FHA farm loan, and they wouldn't loan me any money because I hadn't been in the army. All I was doing basically was riding bulls then. I was just following rodeos. That wasn't a real good reputation back then. Bull-riders wasn't the most thought of guys in the world, and so we went up to the draft board to see where I

was at, and my number was there, so I knew within a month I'd get drafted. I was doing real good in rodeos, and I tried to get them to postpone it. This was probably about in July, and about the 24th of July I got an arm broke in Ogden, real bad, and so I couldn't go in the army, so they let me go until December, then they took me.

JH: When you say you followed the rodeo, that's kind of a regional event. Did you follow it all over the west?

DL: I didn't then. I did later on. Well, before I went in the Army, I was doing the Mexico, Arizona, port to California, Nevada, Wyoming. I was in what they called the Rocky Mountain Region. It wasn't the big boys. It was professional, but it wasn't big time. It wasn't **Larry Mayhans** or the **Shawn Davis**, it was the bunch under it. I could pretty well hold my own with them, but every time I tried to go big time, I just didn't have what it took, and I didn't have the money. Back then it didn't pay anything. It pays now, but back then it just didn't pay any money. You'd go to the National Finals back then on \$3000, but then you'd buy a gallon of gas for 33 cents and a pickup for \$1800.

JH: Being a stockman or a cattleman in this country is a bit different from being a cattleman, let's say, over in Denver or even in Grand Junction. You wanted to be a livestock man in Boulder...

DL: Right, because I'm the fifth generation here, on my dad's side, and the fourth generation on my mother's side. When I got out of the army, I rodeoed for two years and I knew I didn't have what it took. I worked too. I worked for Lyman's when I broke horses, or whatever, and so then I landed up in Casper, Wyoming, because I knew there was a lot of work up there. When I was in the army, I met a guy from there. I went to work on the drilling rigs. I worked on them for nine years. Part of them was with my wife, not all of them, part of them was, and I saved back then, \$100,000 in nine years. Eventually I bought into the company. I rough-necked. Yeah. I rough-necked for five years, and then I drilled for three for three of four years, then I went from a driller to a pusher, and a pusher to a superintendent. Just as soon as I had enough money to come home, I just cashed her out, and that's how we got started. We've struggled. That sounds like a good start, but it didn't take long to spend that money. We bought a permit and we bought this place. I already owned half of this place. We bought the other half from my dad-in-law Ivan Lyman, and it has been a struggle. It has been a struggle ever since, but I just kept

buying. Every time I got a chance, I think because my dad wouldn't, I would. I bought out like 13 or 14 ranches over Escalante, and we just kept going, and we're still broke. Cow prices this year were as bad off as they've ever been, so it's hard to make it here. It really is. We can't trail cows anymore because of this highway. You have to truck them, and that's just more expense, but it's good. I just bought out George Merrill. That's another outfit I just bought. It's going to be tight, but I figured out, if you're going to make it, you've got to get big enough to survive it.

JH: The livestock industry has been going through a variety of changes and adjustments because of the market for the stock, I guess the meat as well as all the other parts of it. What's the secret of adaptability?

DL: Well, you've got to endure to the end I guess. The secret is you have to tighten your belt when you have to tighten your belt. You don't buy new pickups and you learn how to get along with bankers, and you learn every program they are. I was the County Commissioner for 10 years, and I've used that a lot. I've used my contacts. If they've got state money at 6% interest, you find out through these programs by going to meetings and doing things. I've been real aggressive. One reason I've stayed in the ranching business is because I guess I got in politics and been quite political, but this is a political arena we're in. I get along with BLM. I get along with the Forest Service and I get along with the Park Service. I've learned that you don't throw stones at somebody and call them names, and expect to work with them. You go in and you set down, like we're talking here. A lot of these old-time ranchers wouldn't do that. They just would not. I could side-effect early in life that these guys was losing out because they just bulled their neck and then they'd take a big cut and hate everybody instead of trying to work--I've done 3000 acres reseed on my own over in Escalante. I've put in a 17-mile pipeline with drinkers on it. I've spent a lot of money, but I got along with the government doing it, and I'm still in business. I went from 350-pound calves. I've got a desert outfit over there. I run cows on the desert. I went from 350-pound calves to 500-pound calves by doing a lot of this.

JH: Were they yearlings?

DL: No. Just calves. They're born in the spring and they all weigh 500 pounds at the fall of the year, where they used to weigh 350 pounds. That's how I made my investments back over there.

JH: Are we talking about a scientific approach to bringing calves along? Is that what you're telling me?

DL: Yeah. These old-timers, a 300-pound calf or 350 was good enough, but in our day and age today, you've got to get into cross-breeding, you've got to buy the best bulls, and you've got to have a good herd of cows. For me, I want a small cow that's going to have a big calf. You've got to follow your calves right on through. You raise them and sell them. When I sell you calf, I know it's going to marble 1000 pounds, not 1100 or 1200. I know when it's ready to slaughter, so I've got what you call reputation calves. For the last 15, 20 years, I've been able to get the premium price, and I've been able to help a lot of these ranchers sell their calves the same way, but that's just survival. It's just plain economics throughout. My dad couldn't make it in the cow business now. My granddad couldn't make it in the cow business. In 30 more years, then these kids will say the same thing about me. It's progressing all the time. You've got to have what they want or, you know, you're not going to make it.

JH: Are we talking about competition with feed lot beef?

DL: Well, the Packers own the feed lots, and they don't need us, so if you haven't got what they want, guess what? It's too bad. This one-row government thing, or whatever you want to call it, this free-trade is just killing us. We're bringing 40 loads a day from Canada to Hyrum, Utah, to slaughter. Canada, Australia and Argentina is the big countries. They're sending cattle now to Australia; I just read an article just before you came, sending cows from Australia to Mexico, and from Mexico to Texas feed lots. I can buy a ranch in Australia right now with 2000 momma cows on it, 166,000 acres for \$800,000 dollars. I just priced a ranch down in Arizona the other day. It had 50,000 acres of deeded land, and it had 600 momma cows on it for \$7 million, so where are you going to go ranch? You're going to go to Australia. This ranch is in Queensland and it has a port where they can ship them, and I would have enough contacts in the United States, I could get them cows in, but I like it here. I still like it here in Boulder. The economics is what's killing us in the cow business. It's not the people coming in here, it's

just economics. That's why these ranches are selling. Boulder's almost changed hands the last five years. If you could make a living, it wouldn't happen.

JH: Well, when you say, if you're going to make it with aggressive cattle business, is there a niche in the market for beef that you can fill with the kind of operation that you have in mind?

DL: Yeah. I've got a scheme going right now. I guess it's a scheme. I've been working with some guys, and I've decided that they're still in kindergarten. I've got a doctorate in the beef business. I've been in it all my life. I went to Casper College, and I've got the same education these guys down here have got, so I guess you'd say there's an niche, but you've got to be aggressive. You can't sit back. If, it's like anything else, if you want something, you got to go get it, and somebody's not going to do it for you. I still push. I still get up at daylight, and I go until dark. I still ride a horse 15 hours a day. I lost my lungs in the service, and I've never really slowed down over it. I lost my lungs, and I lost a shoulder, and I just kept right on a going. I could have sit back and took an army pension. I was too proud to even take a medical discharge. I stayed in that hospital 9½ months, and when they turned me out, I headed for Boulder. They says "We'll give 30% or 60% of whatever you qualify for," and I said "I don't want your...all I want to do is go home and be a cowboy. I've spent my time for the government. Now I'm going home." They said, "stay here and we'll send you to Vietnam." I said, "Hey, you guys have had it. I'm gone. Back to Boulder I go," and that's where I came, and I married somebody from Boulder. I knew if I didn't you'd never get a woman to live here. I was older when I got married, but I figured out, if you're going to get somebody to stay in boulder, you better get somebody that was raised in Boulder. If you go try to bring a city girl in here, it won't work.

JH: I think there's an adaptability, especially the fairer sex.

DL: Oh I've watched it, and it's a hard country on women. My wife didn't like it. She started adopting these kids. Then she found her niche, and it has really worked. I can go and do my thing now, and she can just run these kids. When they get big enough, I work them.

JH: [laughter]. Let's talk about that idea of sense of place and identity with a place. We're talking about home. What is there about Boulder that makes you think it's home?

DL: I don't know. You know, I was raised here and I lived in Wyoming. When I got going on this drilling company, we drilled these ventilation shafts, big holes, and so I lived in New Mexico for quite a while, down around Grants and Gallup. I lived in Safford. We worked in Safford. I lived in Idaho Springs, Colorado. I lived in Missouri. I lived in Michigan. I lived in Kentucky. We done a job down in Cave Rock in Kentucky and Harrisburg, Illinois. I worked up at White Pine, Michigan, and we're talking over a 10-year period. We was moving around, and Gladys moved with me a lot. I guess we worked Idaho and Nevada, and then I rodeoed. I mean, I bummed all around rodeoing and I've seen, well, there's some nice places, and I thought Wyoming was ideal until I seen some winters up there. These guys basically is feeding cows four and five months a year, and so their profit was going out. They cut wild hay up there, but still it was going out in hay bails. I watched in Mexico. I wasn't too happy about Mexico. I've got a boy up in Oregon. He keeps saying I should go up there and ranch, but my dad-in-law just went up there in Oregon. Don't show me anything. They got more environmental problems up there than we got here, and so I guess I bounced around enough. I spent time in South America. When I was in the service I spent 18 months in Alaska and I was security, so I even got into Siberia. Back then, the guy I was a security guard to was the brains of atomic bombs going off in Siberia. That's where Russia was testing their bombs. We knew more going on. It was just like us doing it, and I guarded it, so I seen quite a lot in my life, and I just always drifted back to Boulder. I had a chance to buy a ranch in Wyoming, a whale of a ranch back then, but I just couldn't bring myself to do it. My wife was in Salem, Missouri, we could have bought 500 acres with a house and a dairy barn for \$4000, and I had the money. Missouri is good cattle country. They can raise more on 1000 acres than I can raise on 90,000 acres I've got permitted in private land around here, but I just couldn't handle that hot, muggy...the people were super down there. I was at Fort Lenderwood for a while in the service. I went through a school there, and that was the hottest, stickiest place in the world. Fort Lenderwood is right by Rollo, Missouri, and on highway 66, it was miserable. I was there in the summertime, and coming from here, I guess it's always been Boulder. Like I say, my roots is in Garfield County. My folks was here, and so I just kind of decided. I bought half of this place here in 1965. I bought the bottom half of this. My dream, when I was a kid, was to own this



ranch. The Lyman's had it, and I told Kirk, the old boy who just passed away, I said "Kirk, one of these days I'm going to own that ranch." He says "It'll never happen. The Lyman's will never sell it." Well, Kirk married a school teacher and she moved him out, and I bought the lower half of it.

JH: [Laughter] Never say never.

DL: Yeah.

JH: You know, there's another thing about homeness. You could talk about the way the land lays, and you could talk about the way the sun comes over the hill in the morning, or goes down on the other side at night, but there's also something about the people that makes it...

DL: Oh, and Boulder, to me growing up, hey, I found good people everywhere I went. I found super good people, especially in Missouri. Some of the old farm gals down there was just ideal, but the people of Boulder, and that's what bothers me today, the make-up of Boulder is changing, and every one of these old boys we put in the grave, like we did Kirk the other day, it just breaks my heart because there's another piece of history gone. There's not another of that type. We're not raising that type anymore. I hope to God I am, even though I'm 20 years younger than Kirk, I hope that I'm a piece of that type, because I grew up with nothing. We earned our money and we went to school, but the people come into Boulder. They're good people, but they're not of that pioneer stalk people, and they don't know what tough times is. These old-timers, they may have talked about each other, but of somebody broke his leg or got sick, they done his work. They just teamed together. It was nothing. I started out up here with 30-head of cows on the mountain up here. I had 30-head, I think, before I got drafted. I rode just as hard as the guy who had 500-head. We didn't seem to care, but then if I need the bull and couldn't afford one, the guy with 500-head would loan me a bull. It was more like a big family. We rode the bus. I rode that bus to Escalante all the time I went to school. I thank the good L the day I did because, like I said, I was dyslexic, there was two older girls on that bus, and they worked with me an hour morning, or an hour and a half, whatever it took, an hour and a half at night, them girls would make me read to them. I thank these girls today because I learned to read. They used to give me spelling words. They was a make-up of Boulder and we've lost that. I could probably move now and not

bother me, but five years ago, you couldn't drug me out of this country. I don't like the change that's coming. Little ranchettes down the road here, and motels, and Garfield County, and the State of Utah, all we can talk about is tourism. That's a damn poor industry. Tourism don't do nothing. There's not a tax base in tourism. One good oil field out here produces more taxes than all the tourists in Garfield County, but the schools is going down. Everything is going down because you can't pay people \$5 an hour and expect them to live, not even in Garfield County, and that's all you're going to get out of these tourism jobs. So, I don't know, it's a struggle. There's no answers.

JH: Lets return for a minute and talk about these two girls. You haven't named them. Lets talk about those two girls. They didn't know the with dyslexia. What did they know about you that made them want to help you?

DL: I was their baby brother, more or less. You know what I mean? I was just one of the boys on the bus that was having trouble in school.

JH: What did they see in you that made them want to help you?

DL: I think is one of the girl's friends was a good friend with my dad. They worked together, the fished together, and back then they hunted a lot. You know, those old boys would get together in the fall of the year and go out and they'd fish. They'd fish for a need. We'd go fishing so my mother could bottle it. The limit meant nothing. If there was a deer across the field, we had him, and we bottled him. Back then, the whole 16 kids on the bus, or whatever it was, were more like brothers and sisters. We didn't put up with one making fun of another. There was a pecking order too, but you didn't. The bigger ones would put up with, you know, so I am assuming it was like a happy family. I still keep up with these people. I had an old buddy, Anthony Coombs, got in a car wreck two years ago, and I was in the hospital, with my lungs, I'd been in there about a month, out to Richfield, and when he had this accident, he was paralyzed from the waist down, that was a hard a blow as I'd ever suffered, because I and him grew up together, we drank together, we helped each other, and if he needed something, he could get it. If I needed something, it balanced out over the long haul, and when you get a community like that, you've got something, but that's what we're losing. Maybe that's the American way, I don't know, but that's what we're going to lose here in Boulder, is because these people coming in, all their looking at is the dollar. That dollar don't mean diddley-whittle to me.

If you can feed your kids and make a living, enough to get by, that's all that matters. I've watched these old rich guys, and guess what? They got more problems than I got. Money breeds problems. A lot of money. You can see these old farmers. They've lived here all their lives, get a chance to sell out for \$5,000,000, but what they going to do with it?

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- JH: I heard you use the word neighbor, but it sounds like the concept of neighborliness. You just described it as helping one another. Is that neighborliness, does that go along with the idea of Boulder that I heard you talk about earlier?
- DL: Years ago. It's not neighbors now, but years ago it was neighbors. You was neighbors and you was friends, and you accepted each other. If you had faults, you accepted them. If another guy had a fault, you accepted it. To me now, you could be a neighbor, and not be in agriculture. Back then it was a bond. They was all struggling to make it. It was kind of a bond. Now we have neighbors. In fact, I have neighbors would just as soon my cows went off the hill. I have neighbors who walk right past me in church and won't say a word. It's not even the church I joined when I was 33 years old. My dad's a Mormon, I guess he is, but he's not. He don't care about church, so I grew up kind of that way. It's not the church I joined. Back with the old-timers, you was welcome, and you went to church as a study. You prayed together, you studied together, you helped each other, and now I almost fell over backwards. One woman told me the other day, she just goes to see what the next gal's wearing. Who gives a hoot. You could wear a green tie to church. I thought, boy we are changing and changing fast. It's like a town council. We kinda got a few back in this time, but it's controlled by somebody that just moved in. They're not bad people, it's a different culture, different customs. We've lost that, cultures and customs. I'm 58 years old now. There's no more Dell LeFevre's going to come along. You couldn't buy a ranch now if you cried your eyes out. I figured out how to do it. My boys, there's no way. I don't care, not unless they become a famous lawyer or something, if they were a doctor, that they could ever buy this, because this is real property. It's not ranch property anymore, it's ranch property. When you can sell land

for \$15,000 or \$20,000 an acre, big pieces for \$10,000 acre. I've got \$50,000 land I bought 15 years ago. I'm still having a struggle to try and pay it off with cows, so that's the top. Right now, that's the top you could ever get from this land and ever come out. You'd have to have a lot of cows to do it. Back when I was a kid, 100 cows was a lot of cows. These old boys, lots of them didn't have 100 cows. Two or three outfits did, but the rest of them had just a small bunch of cows. We all milked cows. When I was a kid, we milked 15 milk cows by hand, night and morning. I didn't have to milk em in the mornings, but we milked. I think I was assigned five cows at night. I milked them cows winter, summer, rain. We didn't have to get up and milk in the mornings. Well, maybe we would in the fall of the year. My dad and mother milked them cows, and we sent cream, and that was their way of making ready cash, and you never questioned it. I ask one of these kids to do something and it's always, "Do I have to do it?" The whole society is screwed up. We've lost work ethics in the United States. You can't get sprinkler changers anymore. These kids don't have to work. We grabbed any job, and was glad to do it. We used to buck hay. They didn't have bail wagons when I was a kid. We hauled hay, when they started bailing hay, we hauled hay. We could always get a hay job, and you worked for about a buck an hour, and you worked. But when you went home with \$8, you had something. Now these kids, all they do is they want it handed out to them. In a way they are that way here. We was all on the same plane. Nobody was rich. Nobody was starving, but they got by. I wore mismatched shoes to school and didn't think anything about it. Can you imagine what one of these kids would do now if they done that? We used to double our socks up. My mother used to mend socks. You ever wore a sock with another heel sewed in it? It was always making sores on your feet, but that's all we had. We used to get three or four shirts and a pair of Levis, and that's what put us through. My mother made my coats. We didn't know any different, because everybody was the same way. With this bunch you got now, you got these developers and all they're after is the mighty dollar. They are not caring about this land. These people married this land. They lived with this land, but when they went on, they wanted to make sure the land stayed intact. There's been a lot of rocks hauled off this place, a lot of sweat and blood, and these old-timers didn't want to see it just piddled away, and

that's what's happened today. They're just building houses I guess, ranchettes, 40 acres, 20 acres, 10 acres, whatever.

JH: I hear you saying that you can't get it back.

DL: You can't. It's gone. There might be some places left like this. Who knows. I keep thinking. I keep reminiscing over old times and old cowboys and old bull-riders, and I keep saying "Where did they go? What are they doing? Are they ranching? Did they get their dream? Are they selling equipment somewhere? What are they doing? Where do I find that dream at again?" I don't know. I'm a die-hard. I'll probably hang on just as long as I can, but you're running out of cowboys. You go up on the mountain and this modern cowboy is not the old hardworking cowboys. They're different. I've raised boys the same way, so I don't know what the answer is. I've got a boy who's 20 years old, one of the best little cowboys you ever seen, but he don't care a hoot about it. He goes for a couple of years, and this year he's working on a drill rig. He's trying to follow what I did. I don't know.

JH: I'm back to that question, the people that we talked about as pioneers knew how to adapt.

DL: They were survivors. They knew how to survive, not adapt, survive. They took the elements and they run with them. I watch the waste now that never was there. I've got some little orchard over the gulch and I watch the fruit waste. If you pick it and give it to somebody, they would take it. My mother used to bottle it all. What fell on the ground we fed to pigs. You went overnight, I and my sister, just little kids, you gathered all the apples that fell on the ground and you fed them to your pigs and you butchered them pigs in the fall. We just don't do that anymore. Even us here. We butcher our own beef, but we don't fiddle with pigs. Most of them had large families. Like I said, they adapted to the situation. A lot of them left. In fact, people been leaving since I was a kid. They grew up and move away, and I and this Anthony, this guy I was telling you about, this Anthony Coombs, we're the only ones that stayed around. Some of them came back, and there's some a few years younger, two or three years younger, I guess, stayed around, but they had to leave because there wasn't enough room on the farm for all of them. I couldn't have lived over there with my dad. We'd have starved to death if I tried to move in. I knew I had to get my own outfit, and I had a chance to marry one time. I always

wondered. They was a big outfit. This guy told me, he said "If you marry my daughter, I'll buy that for you and you can just pay me back." I looked at him and I looked at his daughter and I couldn't do it. I was only 20 or 21 years old. I thought, maybe next year. By that time I was drafted and gone. It's always been hard to make it around here. It's been hard work. Them old fellers, they worked every day of their life, and I think most of them was fairly happy. I think they was happier than this new generation we got.

JH: You know, there's an interesting dichotomy that you're talking about. In a sense, we're talking about heaven, but at the same time, heaven came at a fairly steep price, and those people who thought of it as heaven, and made it heaven, made it that way because they were willing to work.

DL: I'm a firm believer. You can make your hell or heaven right here. You've got to live every day like it's your last, fullest, and if you don't live it the best you can, you're not going to turn around and get another crack at it, so you better make heaven...I've lived in the best of times. I was born between two wars; Korea, it let out in '54, whatever, Vietnam didn't start in '58, but it really didn't kick off until '65, and so I was in before '65, and I was smart enough to go to school in the army. I decided if I'm going to be in this place, I grabbed every school that come down the pike, and so I finally bumped into something that I knew that I wouldn't be in Vietnam getting shot at. You can make your own heaven. Things kind of turned out sour for me in the army, but it still beat what a lot of them went through. I was at least trained when things happened. A lot of them just got six weeks basic, and, boom, they was gone. I'm a firm believer, you make your own heaven or hell right here. Most of our wounds is self-inflicted. You do something dumb. Guess what? You're going to get hurt. I found this out riding bulls. See, I was a cautious bull-rider. If I was in trouble, I got off. I never hung. I rode a lot of bulls. I rode a lot of saddle broncs, and I got hurt, don't get me wrong. I'll tell you one, just before I got married, I was up to Kaycee, Wyoming. They had a jackpot rodeo and they had \$700. I couldn't get in saddle broncs, they was both bucked in, so I got on bare-back, and I was not a bareback rider. I won that rodeo, and I knew I'd won it because I really drew a rank horse. I jumped off that horse and he kicked me right in the head. When I was supposed to get married, I was laying in the hospital and didn't know who I was. It's rough, but most of the times we get ourselves in a bind or, we get in life, we

screw up ourself. Most people try to blame somebody else. It's so easy to say, hey, I'm sorry, let's start over. I've noticed in most men that's a big word. When I grew up, my father never told me he loved me. He never touched me. It's so easy to put your arm around a kid and say, "hey, I love you," or "I made a mistake." Dad's make mistakes. My dad never said it. Maybe that was the best. I don't know what the answer is. Look at the drugs and things kids get into now. My dad would beat the whey out of me. We lived in a better world. There wasn't drugs. I didn't even know about drugs 'until I got in the army. I'd heard of marijuana, but I didn't know all this LSD crap until I got in the army. These kids from New York and New Jersey, they was the first ones who ever told me about it. I was raised right around here. I didn't know that people used that stuff, so I was born in good times. Who knows what'd happen to me if I was born today. I don't know whether I'd have survived. Sex wasn't loose. When I was a kid, you just didn't do it. It was just that simple. The guys that done it, got somebody pregnant and had to get married. I was going to be a bull-rider. I didn't have time to be doing stuff like that. Like I said, even though my dad wasn't active in the church, somewhere I got taught. I guess my mother, I got taught morals. Now days it's loose. It's turned loose on the streets. Even in the army, I never really went to places where a lot of guys got in trouble. I went there, but I was security. I was guarding a guy and that was it. They tell you, "Something happens to him, you're in Leavenworth buddy."

JH: You told me earlier that you had served as a county commissioner for 10 years. Let's talk about that as a form of public service. What does public service mean? What does it mean to be a county commissioner making decisions for a whole county? Why did you run for the commissioner?

DL: Oh, the BLM was kicking' us off some ranges, and the county commissioners we had. They made Capitol Reef Park when I was a young man, very young, they made Capitol Reef Park down here. That was about the time I was getting out of the service, and I didn't like Johnson anyhow, so there I went to work and came back, and I had cattle in the park. I had cattle down in Capitol Reef Park, and these ranchers was just getting pushed around. I done it more for the ranchers than for myself back then. I mean, they didn't have spokesmen. They had a guy that, he was a good guy, and he had had cattle, so I thought, well, you know, the Lord gave me these talents, and so I run, and I run

against the impossible. I run against a guy who had been there for years. The timber people was big around here then, and they put him in, and the construction people, there was a lot of oil in Escalante, and I run as a cowboy, and I and my wife knocked on every door in the county. We shook every hand in the county, and I got elected. Like I said, I was a whole lot smarter when I got into it. I got into it and found out it was a can of worms, but I found out that you had to get involved. Scott Mattheson was the governor. I was 36 years old. Back then they did it young. You didn't get paid anything. You got paid \$2000 a year, \$1800, I think, when I went in. It was a sacrifice. It cost me \$10,000 a year to be a county commissioner, but you get into it and you start to see. I started working with the government. We backed the government off. You started seeing this old knocking head thing. The county was bankrupt when I got in there. I'd been in business long enough that I said, "Hey, before I leave this mess, we're going to have \$1 million surplus." You start to work and you get town meetings. I just got things going. I made mistakes. I started the Burr Trail and I built this road over the mountain out. I didn't realize building this road ( Highway 12) over the mountain would let people in. I should have never done it. I went to Washington. I lobbied for this thing, I worked with Garn and Hatch and Hansen, and I had no idea. I testified in Washington with my cowboy hat, boots, chaps and spurs on, just so they would know. I got more doing things like that for the county. By the way, when I quit, I was getting run out. I put 10 years in and came home. My wife wanted to adopt some kids and so I came home, but they had \$1 million surplus when I left. We was in good shape.

JH: You reached your objective.

DL: Yeah, but the county's broke again. It took them people three years to spend my money. I look around and I've done some good things. I built the courthouse. We didn't borrow a dime to build that addition on the courthouse. I've been on the school board now for about eight or nine years. I got interested in the schools because I figured I'd done all I could. I've got a lot of goals to meet in this school. I'll have to stay there a long time if I get everything done I think should happen. We are still graduating kids that can't read nor write. I guess I was one of them, and that really bothers me. Everything we have today, if a kid can't learn to read and write, I don't care what his parents is or what, they've got to learn to read and write, and we're graduating them and they can't do it, so



that's really my goal now. I think I got too involved. I about lost my whole family over it. We had three adopted kids then, and I got involved. You can't solve the world's problems. My wife says I'm still doing a lot of that. You get too involved with people. Some little lady would call me up and I'd go down in the middle of the night and fix her T.V. You can't do that, but it's hard for me not to do that, because I've had it good. I've really had it good in this old world. I was out of the commission a year, maybe two years, and I run for the house of representatives, and I run again when the good old boys clubs. Well, I went to Salt Lake. I had no idea what it paid. I went to Salt Lake and filed, and they take a percentage of your money. I found it cost me \$7 to file, so I figured out real quick them guys was only making about \$3000 or \$4000 a year, and I knew all the meetings they had to go to. I got to be quite a lobbyist when I was a commissioner. I really lobbied a lot of things through for the county, and I thought I'm not going to do this for this. I thought what I'll do is I'll scare this old boy into either quitting or doing something, and so I went to the republican conventions and all the while, I missed two counties I guess. There are seven counties in this district down here, in '73, there were seven counties, and so then I just kind of come home and farmed, but if I would have campaigned, I would have got in. He beat me 70 votes, and I never campaigned.

JH: You never campaigned?

DL: Uh-uh. They had a thing down in Kanab, meet the candidates, a couple of them, but when I found out what it curtailed...but I did. I scared the old boy in until the next time he dropped out. I completely lost Kane county and Washington county. I got 90% of the votes from Garfield county, Wayne country and Piute county, and Richfield, Southern in Sevier County, but I went to a deal down in Kanab and they set me up and it was fine. They asked me about abortions. Well, you don't ask somebody about abortion who couldn't have kids. I blew my stack at a bunch of them California gals back there. In Washington, I wouldn't promise them any golf courses. I had a cowboy way about me that if you didn't understand cowboys, you didn't like cowboys. I've been always fairly good-sized. They had a county fair in Washington, and this guy I was running against was pretty smooth. He was an insurance salesman. I could stay out of trouble, so I didn't care. I guess I should have done, so I decided after that I was going to go for the school, so then I run on the school board, and I've been elected. I'm up again this fall, think fifth

to go, but I like helping kids. If you don't stick up for these kids, nobody's going to. All these kids' parents don't care. They just flat don't, and I can't figure somebody bringing a kid in the world and not caring about them. I guess that's why I got so many of these kids around. Somebody has to try and take care of these kids.

JH: You said that you were a lobbyist. What does it take to be a good lobbyist?

DL: Well, you know, I go at things hard. I don't, I got a printout on ever, more so on the house, ever representative in the house. I knew how many kids he had, I knew what he done, I knew everything about him. We studied them. I got the name of Steven Kramer, and we had a picture of him so if you seen him, you knew him, you could talk to him, and that opened up doors. If you know, not so much the senate, most things that happen, happen in the house. The senate does too, but I knew them guys, so if you can talk to somebody, and I've been pretty good talking, but if you know something about them...I even knew when they divorced, how many kids from the other marriage. Most of them was either teachers or lawyers. I didn't have a lot in common. If you testify, do your homework. Know what you're doing. It's okay to act like a dumb cowboy, but you better be pretty sharp when you go up against them boys. The things I lobbied for was mainly agriculture and county things that was a need. Like I said, I went up there two years after, but I wasn't cut out to be a lobbyist because I don't believe in wining and dining. When you was a commissioner, you do it on the county, kinda, but when I started doing it, I got a few calls from different people. I wasn't the type that was going to wine and dine these guys. I don't believe you have to go buy you a steak for a vote. Either you're going to do it or your not, and you never put pressure on them, and you still like them if they don't vote for you, if they disagree with you. If somebody disagrees with you, that's no sign of a bad guy. I and you can sit here and have a damnedest argument you ever seen, but we should be able to shake hands and still be friends, and a lot of lobbyists is not that way. A lot of politicians is not that way. You cross them up and you're on the little black, whether it was a good project or a bad project, you're on that list.

JH: Is Boulder going to need a lobbyist? Is Garfield going to need a lobbyist?

DL: Well, right now Garfield county has a representative, which is a pretty good lobbyist. Even politics has changed since I been in. I've been out of the commission now 12 years,

and even politics is changed. I don't know what Boulder is going to need. See, what's happened to Boulder, a few of us larger land owners, they're trying to zone it where we can't even sell our property. You're going stay agriculture. That's just like me saying, "Okay, you retired from the state. All right, but I'm going tell you what to do with your retirement. I'm going to spend so much over here, or else you can only do this. You are going to stay within this window. You can't go fishing, you can't go hunting. You're going to rock on the porch." That's the way I feel is what we're trying to do with Boulder. The planning commission in Boulder, the largest land owner owns 3 acres, so we came and got what we want, and now we're going to tell you what we want you to do. That's where I see some real problems. I don't know. You know, it's a strange one. If I don't want to get rich, I could have been a lobbyist, but I'd have been a bastard, and you still have to live with yourself. If you can't feel good about something, don't do it. If you can do something and you feel good about it, do it, because it's usually good. If you got to be phony, I found that out, most lobbyists is phony. I found myself starting to fit that groove, so it was time to go home, get on a horse, get some fresh air, take a breath, and drink out of the stream and see what life's all about, but if you get around that group very long, you become one of them. To me it's a jungle. I don't really like jungles, so you better stay out in the open. They're always eating little fish up there. I guess I've been kind of a scrapper. You have to sometimes fight for what you want, but if you're going to get whipped before you start, don't do it.

JH: I can identify with that philosophy, but there's something that goes along with this country that people identify with a horse. I heard you mention leaving and coming back and riding a horse. What is there about riding a horse that is therapeutic?

DL: I don't know. I've often thought about that. Someone can call me up in the morning and bomb on me, and I can have things going bad, and I can catch a horse and go over on the desert, and in 30 minutes I'm a different guy. I'm alone. You think a lot. You're just riding along. It's therapy is what it is. It's made me what I am. Everybody has to have an escape of some kind. I guess maybe that's it, but if you escape and do something at the same time, if you can do your work, I don't care if checking fences, riding through your cows or doctoring calves, or what you're doing, I enjoy being alone. I guess that's one reason I never liked the commission. I like people on my terms. When you're

county commissioner, you've been a public servant, you've got to take them on their terms. If you're not ready to take them on your terms, sometimes it can be a tough day, but there's just something about a horse. I love horses. I have always had good horses and I have had good dogs. I've sit and watched a set of dogs. I've got five dogs out here. I can move any cow in the country. I'm the best roper in the country and I don't even have to get off a horse. My dogs catch them, and I just go up and put my ropes on them.

End of Tape No. 1

Tape No.: 2

Side No.: A

JH: ...August 26, 1998. We're in his home in Boulder, and we're talking about his reminiscences and some of his ideas. My name is Jay Haymond. You've just talked about being on a horse, and you enjoy being on a horse. I think you kind of believe in horses. What is there about being on horseback? I think I heard you say, or maybe I believe that you wanted to say it's restful.

DL: It is. You have to really relax to get on a horse, and if you want to accomplish something, get a horse and cut cattle. Watch that horse work. Feel him work. A horse can be a team. You can't abuse a horse. I'm a horse lover. Horses are a lot like people. They've got make-ups, they've got moods, they've got faults.

JH: It's almost like they have a personality.

DL: Yeah, they do. They have a personality. You can't get it all together. There's not such a thing as a perfect person. There's not such things as a perfect horse, but you can keep working this horse. The difference between a horse and a person is, maybe a horse is, I say a horse is smarter than a person, but a lot of people disagree with me. A person you can try and teach, if they're teachable, but a horse, I've never seen a horse yet, very few of them, that wasn't teachable. I get in a lot of trouble over this, I shouldn't say it, but you know we breed horses for perfection, we don't people. I mean, you get a good cutting a horse, you breed him to another good cutting horse. You get a good set of dogs,

you breed them to another good set of dogs. You know what I mean? You breed for this. Maybe I expect more out of a horse, but you can get more. They can hurt you. When I go to heaven, old Kirk Lyman's going to have all my good horses caught and waiting for me, [laughing] so I can just go down town and he's already got them saddle up. All I gotta do is go down and get them good horses I've had. I've had some good horses.

JH: You've had favorite horses?

DL: Oh yeah.

JH: Tell me about your favorite horses.

DL: Well, I had a horse go crazy one time. When I come to ride him, he bucked every morning when you got on him. I was young and I was a good rider and I could handle him. That horse could cut a cow. He had a personality of his own. I had a little blue horse. My dad sold him when I was in the army. I never got over that little blue horse, but the old boy that got him treated him just like a kid for the rest of his life. Ever so often, there's one comes along. I hate to say right now, I've got 15-head of horses. I haven't got a good horse. I have not got a good horse right now. I bought one just the day before yesterday that's got the breeding to be a good horse. I give a lot of money for him. I guess that comes with getting older in the ranching business. If I see a good horse now, I buy him. If I see a good saddle I buy it. When I was a kid, I rode an old cactus root saddle all the time. I would sooner have a good saddle than a good pickup. I'd sooner have a good horse, but right now I don't have a good horse, so I have a goal. I've got a potential down here. He got hit in the eye last spring. I just brought him home tonight. The eye is almost better, and so I'll start working him again. I've got three or four potentials, but I don't have a real good one. You kinda get attached to them. If you don't like a horse, you can't make him a good horse. If you like a horse, you can make him. I can tell you the first 30 minutes I ride a horse what he's going to be in the end. You'll know what the end product is. It don't take long to figure that out. It's just like if you're a teacher and you've got a student, it's not very long until you figure out that student is going to go somewhere. I don't care what you do, you're not going to drag that student along where this student's going to go, and that's the way horses are.

JH: A good horseman can work a good horse. Can a bad horseman misuse a horse?

DL: Oh definitely. That's why I hate this new breed of cowboys. I respect a bucking a horse. I respect a bucking bull. They're a challenge, but these guys that was ropers, I call them Sunday school boys, I seen too many of them would miss a calf and take it out on the horse. It's a team. If the horse makes a bobble, it's just as much your fault as it is the horse's fault, so hit yourself, don't jerk the horse. Hit yourself. I'm kind of strict with a horse. I expect a lot out of a horse. You don't have to beat it out of a horse, you can coax it out of a horse. I don't care how good the horse is. If the cowboy's no good, the horse is no good. A mediocre cowboy can get a good horse and look good, if you got sense enough to kind of work with the horse. I know a guy here in this valley he couldn't make a good horse if he cried his eyes out, and he rides all the time. Some people just don't have that. I think I was born, whether it came through the genes; we're talking about breeding these horses, whether that came in my genes or, I don't know. You can show me a horse right now, and five years from now I can show you that same horse if he goes down the street. Horses got faces like people. Once you learn a horse, it's the same with cows. My wife got roughly 600-head of mother cows right now, well more than that, and I can't miss a cow, but if I see that cow, I can give you that cow's history, but it comes with years and year of studying. It's not natural. You work at it.

JH: Is Max LeFevre a good horseman?

DL: Oh, he's one of the best. My wife's dad, he was kind of mean to a horse. I grew up around good horsemen. Kirk Lyman is one hell of a horseman, and Dale Lyman, his brother I worked with a lot. I used to work for her dad a lot. Anytime I needed a job, her dad would hire me. How did I pay him off? I married his daughter. That wasn't the best, but them old timers was good horsemen. There's an old boy downtown here called Carter Ormund. Carter couldn't say ten words to you without swearing nine of them, but old Carter could take a horse. He could take a give-out horse and ride it 20 more miles and never hurt it. I grew up around good horsemen. Back when I was a kid, everybody went somewhere on a horse. There was vehicles too. My dad used to come over to Boulder here, he'd saddle his horse up, come and get that cow and drive her all the way to Salt Gulch. We didn't have a vehicle, so we was used to horses. Now we use cutting alliey. We got an alliey. We run the cows down the alliey. It used to be we went in an cut them out with a horse. Now we use allieys, but you still do a lot of horse work. My

outfit is a cowboy outfit. You ride all the time. It's just like my day started today. It was probably noon before I really got going, so I've changed the sprinklers and I have problems. I've got some leased places where I turn the water on, and I went to Escalante, and probably at 1 o'clock I was on a horse, and I just barely got home before you came. My day tomorrow, I've got a cow that's been clawed by a bear. I stopped and got some medicine. I've got to go find that calf tomorrow to see if I can save that calf that the bear clawed. Everyday there's something to do, pretty much on a horse, but a few days go by we don't work with. We're modern. My granddad's turning over in his grave. I've got a trailer out here on a truck I can haul to Escalante, where my dad and granddad used to ride to Escalante. They used to take a pack and sleep on the ground. When it gets dark, I get in my pickup and come home, load my horse in my trailer, so we really do have it easier than they had it, but then, I don't know if we have it any better, and our kids are going to figure out an easier way to do it than we're doing it. I don't know if that's better or not.

JH: You're talking about treating the livestock for a medical condition. Are there veterinarians that you call on?

DL: I do now. I used to didn't. We done all of our own vets. I can cut a calf out of a cow or cesarean. I can, you name it. We used to do it all. We use a vet a lot more now because I think there's more germs, there's more sickness. The cattle used to be born and raised here and shipped out. Now I might buy 150- or 200-head of cows and just bring them in here. I might buy them in Nevada. We vaccinate more. We use a vet. I never learned to Prag. We Prag all of our cows in the fall of the year. We vaccinate them. We worm them. Our vet bills around \$3000 or \$4000 a year. We use a vet quite a lot. Right now you've got to save every cow you got. Years ago, it seems like we expected on losing about 6%. I can't lose over 3% or I'm broke. The dollar's got tighter. I'm going to get basically the same price this year as I got in 1973 for cattle. In 1973, the year I started, you could buy a gallon of gas for .39 cents. You could by a brand-new pickup for \$3000. Now a new pickup, they say, is \$30,000, and the cow is the same price. That's what's killing the ranching business, just plain economics. You're going to come back here in five years and you'll be lucky to find a cowboy.

JH: Can you change the economics?

DL: No.

JH: Can you get the economics to go in your favor?

DL: No. It's controlled by the money. The big dollars control the cow market now. It's just like you can't change the stock market. You might study it and learn it, but you can't control it. When they decided to pull the plug and let it go down, there's too many players now. My dad knew every year what he was going to get for his calves, 1 or 2 cents. Now they're 25 cents a pound cheaper this year than they was last year. That's \$100 a calf. I'm going to lose, on the first sale, I'm going to lose \$40,000. I need that \$40,000. We went through three bad years of low prices to get one, and then it went right back down. The American people has had to ride on the farmer; 15% to 16% of your pay is going for food, and it's not the farmer getting it, it's that middle guy. You go to the grocery store and buy beef, you're paying. You come out to this old farm and buy beef and you're going to get a real bargain. People have to go hungry first, and the big man keeps buying up the little man, and when they get them all bought up, you look a the price go up then. In India, 90% of your wage goes for food. Now, what is it, 25? I forget the figures, I've had them before, goes for recreation. We spend more for recreation than we do food. I'll bet the in India they don't know what recreation is. Go to Lake Powell, can't get a boat on the water.

JH: The livestock business has been romantic. A cowboy is a romantic figure, sort of captured the imagination of people. Has it been romantic for you?

DL: Oh yeah. It's been a lasting love-affair with me. I still enjoy it. I think of the years that I didn't do it, and I get mad, because I lost some years. I lost 15 years that I should have been a cowboy, and I had to do other things to get the ranch, to be a cowboy. I didn't want to just work for somebody else. I watched these guys and they started getting knocked out around 50 years old, they'd just let them go on hire. Some young guy could carry the ball. I didn't want to be that way. I didn't want to work for somebody else. I knew I had to own my own ranch. I married Gladys, and we went without. We've struggled. I don't think people realize, even though we had a little money going in to this, we borrowed. I'm still in debt. When I got out of the commissioner, I was in debt over \$1 million. I'm still in debt probably \$500,000 or \$600,000. We're paying more interest than we live on, a lot more. You start wondering, well, okay, I've got this piece



of property that's not doing me a bit of good, how long before I dump it and get out of debt? But then you do that, then what? My makeup, I'd just go back in on something else. I'd just go buy a bigger ranch, more cows or more permits. I can buy that fast enough without. To me it is, and maybe a lot of people it's not. Maybe I'm just an idiot. I don't know, but I've loved life. I've had a good life. I'm real fortunate. I've been retired since 1973. I've never had a penny in my pocket since 1973. We've gone without. I've only owned two new pickups in my life; this one sitting right out here, and I bought on in 1988. Other than that, I just run old junkers. When I was the County Commissioner, my wife made my suits. We didn't buy them. We didn't have it. I always claimed clothes don't make a man. I guess it's hard to tell. It's a sacrifice to be a rancher, even in my time, but these kids won't sacrifice to do it. Back in Temp Reynolds day, he was over in natural resources, Governor Matheson, they tried to hire me for the PR man for natural resources. They throwed so much money at me, it just scared me, and I thought what would I do? I have three adopted kids, we got two of them when they was older and they was problems, I thought what would I do in Salt Lake trying to raise these kids? I shouldn't tell you this, but I had a hard time in the army because I never seen a horse. I was in basic training in Fort **Ord**, California, and there was a bull-rider I knew by the name of Bob Wash. How he got on post, I don't know. He woke me up at 2 o'clock in the morning and he said "Dell, you don't belong here." He was an Indian. He was a Navajo from down in Arizona. He was from down in Wind Rock. He says "Dell, this is no place for you. The government's beat the Indians up all their life." I said, I'm not an Indian." He said "I don't care." He says "they're going to kill you." He says "They're going to take you to Vietnam and they're going to shoot you." He said "let's get out of here." I says "where we going?" He says "they're having a bull-ride in Reno, Nevada. He says "let's go." On the spur of the moment, I got dressed in fatigues, went out, got in the back of his old station wagon, he covered me up in a sleeping bag, and out the gate we went. (Laughing as he is speaking) He hauled me to Reno. It was a weekend, and I didn't plan on staying very long; seven days of bull-riding. The first day I rode my bull. The second day I rode my bull. The third day I rode my bull, and I planned on being done by then. I had won a little day money and I figured, well, I'll be done. Well, I wasn't going to go then. The fourth day I rode my bull, and then I was the

only guy, even Bob Wash, a good bull-rider as he was, I was the only guy that rode all four bulls, so I had a bull up on everybody. I wasn't about to leave then. The fifth day I rode my bull, but I got low enough scores they were starting to catch me a gain. The 70s, back then, was a good score; 50s and 60s was good bull-riding scores back in 1960s. Anyhow, the last day, all I had to do was stay on a bull and mark 35, and I drew the dog bull of the bunch. I was seven days AWAL now; scared to death. I rode this bull, and Bob Wash said, he was going to Idaho or somewhere, I say "Bob, I can't go. I got to get back to the army." He said "Oh, you can sleep on the reservation with me. You don't have to go back to the army." He says "they'll never find you." We'll change your name to whatever, they'll never find you." We'll get you a citizenship down on the reservation. He said "The law can't come on the reservation." He said "White man law cannot touch you." I said "That's okay." He said "Let's go." He says "You've made a little money." I won \$700, which was a lot of money back then. That was a lot of money. I was only making \$120 or something in the Army, a month. I won \$700, and he said "I'm not going to take you back." I said "Bob, I've got to go back." I said "That is it." We used to go by this parking lot and there was this 1951 Chevrolet pickup with a dome camper on it. I was going to be a bull-rider, that's what I wanted, so I give \$300 for that old pickup. I got to thinking, going back, it was quite a ways when you're going back and you know you're going to get shot (chuckling as he is speaking). I was riding back to the fort in this old pickup. It took a quart of oil every time I gassed up. It really burned oil. So, I got to the gate, I didn't know how to get in. Here's all these MPs, and so I didn't go in the gate. I pulled past the gate. I went down to where these people catch rides, these GIs could catch rides, a little booth. I went in there and I put my fatigues back on and I thought, this ain't going to get it, so I took my fatigues back off. I was using his equipment until I got a few days of day money, then I bought my own equipment. I put my spurs, my boots, my chaps, my hat on, my whole thing and I thought, okay, go do it, so I got up to the gate and they said "Where you going?" I said "I got a brother here." They said "Who is he?" I said "H. Dell LeFevre." They said "What company is he in?" I said the company. The guy looked at me and said "He's AWAL." I said, he just can't be. Can I go check?" (chuckling) They said "Oh yeah." They give me like three out passes, so I drove over to the company and oh shit, I was

scared. I mean, I was scared. The company commander was black. I had never been around blacks in my life until I got in the army. I thought, well, what the hell, so I mustered up all the courage, I thought I was a pretty bad boy, and I mustered up all the courage I could and in I went. I walked right into the place. The orderly, his runner, they called him, was out front. He said "What do you want?" I said "I want to see the Captain of this outfit." This time he come out of his office. He had a cup of coffee in his hand. He says "Cowboy, this is no place for you. Get the hell out of my office." (laughter). I says "Really? Can I go?" He says "Who are you?" This orderly said "I think that's Private LeFevre." He says "You son-of-a-bitch, where you been?" He says "What have you got on?" He says "What is this?" I said "I'm a bull rider." He's says "You're not a bull-rider." He says "You're in the army now." I says "I guess I am." It was a lucky break. This Captain Baker from Salt Lake was there, and he came in about that time. He had been around cowboys all his life. He talked him in. I got 14 days hard labor. It was a good AWAL, because this Captain Baker is the one who took me under his wing, and that's how I was a security guard for a while, and then I got on to bigger things. It kind of turned out to be a blessing in itself, but I pounded rocks for 14 days.

JH: You did 14 days of hard labor, but you got back in the good graces of the army.

DL: Oh yeah. I had to recycle. I'll tell you, the real truth to this whole thing, the whole company went to Vietnam. This is back when they just sent them over there as advisors. They put most of that whole company. I took the next cycle through. This Captain Baker, I don't know what his deal was. I don't know what he was doing there, but I went down what they call Second [ ] (115). I had to take basic training over again. This Captain Baker come and took me under his wing. He got me in Alaska in security. I went off night force base. This is about the time right after old Castro down there was acting up and Khrushchev was over there acting up, and so I was a security guard on [ ] (122) base for a while, and Captain Baker showed up again, then I got a high clearance. What he was doing then was getting a team together to study their bombs over in Siberia, so I wound up some time at St. Lawrence. I was out on the ice a lot. When it would freeze up, we'd go out on the ice. They had their crews in Siberia. They even had one of the guys wired. They heard every phone call this Russian guy made, so they knew everything. I don't know how they had him wired, but the

Americans had him wired. I was just a body guard. All I done was started out with Captain Baker, then I wound up with Colonel Wheeler, so it wasn't that bad. In fact, I kind of enjoyed it, but like I said, I got pneumonia, out on the ice, real bad. You couldn't get off. I almost died out there. I mean, if you was out there, you was out there. You didn't know where any direction was. It was winter and dark, so I spent 30 days in the hospital when they got me back. I had a bad bull-riding shoulder, and I got it in a bind, and so that's when they sent me down in Presidio, California. I was there nine and a half months. I had a prisoner tied to me, and we took off in this helicopter, and he jumped out, and he thought he could pull me out. I was safety-belted in. I had him on this bad shoulder. I had him on my left shoulder, because he was at the door, and when we got up so high, he was a Russian Eskimo, and he just figured he could roll me out. Boy, he about pulled my arm clear out, so they sent me there to Anchorage. It used to be the old Ladd Air Force Base in Alaska. I was in a doctor there for a while, then my lungs acted up again. I think it was stress, so then they sent me to Anchorage. I was down in Anchorage for about 30 days, then they sent me to Presidio. I was up for discharge when all this happened, so I put in another, almost a year, in the service before they let me come home. All the muscles is gone in my arm. I don't have any shoulder muscles, no nerves, but it didn't slow me down. I can pound nails all day. You just figure out other muscles, you build them up. I rode bulls with it. I tied it down. In fact, it gave me more leverage. We rode bulls different then than they do now. We rode with pressure. You pulled on the rope and pushed on your leg. That kept you balanced. Now they do a different thing. They lean back a little more. We leaned ahead a bit. We used to get hit in the face a lot. These cowboys now don't. They tip back just a little bit. We rode with brutal strength and balance, and them guys, they've got it down to a science now. If I had to do it over again, I'd do it again, but I'd leave the army out.

JH: You talk about adopting a way of life, and I hear you saying you adopted the cowboy way before you left. If you could have done it, you'd have left out the army and adopted a horse.

DL: You know, the army would have been okay if I'd been in calvary days. I liked that up in Alaska. I really did. I really got into homesteaders. Believe it or not, they had a lot of rodeos in Alaska. When I had Baker, he made sure I had every day off there was a rodeo.

I won every rodeo they had in Alaska. That's one place I was ever a hero. I had every little girl having me sign autographs because I rode professional enough that I could, flat, eat their horses alive because they wasn't that good of stock. It didn't matter what, I could shine it up there. I could even win calf-roping up there, the only time I could win calf-roping in my life. I loved Alaska, but I couldn't handle that cold. I just couldn't handle the cold. I was always going to go back, but I must not really wanted to. I was always going to go to Australia. If we can squeak out enough money, I'm going to go there this winter and another guy that I'm buying out over here. He used to have a sheep herd. Got a real good friend, a cowboy over there who I'd like to go to Australia for a month and see. That's about the only thing I got left to do, other than cowboy.

JH: Well, we've gone through some good talk. What I want to do is transcribe this stuff and then get it back to you so that you can tell what you really said.

DL: I've been interviewed enough.

JH: We have your permission to use...?

DL: Yeah, just run with it.